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OIR Contribution to NIE-39: PSYCHOLOGICAL IMPACT  
OF A STRATEGIC AIR OFFENSIVE AGAINST THE USSR

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CONCLUSIONS

1. Strategic bombing was secondary to defeats on the fighting fronts in depressing civilian morale in World War II.
2. There is virtually no evidence indicating that strategic or atomic bombing incited lasting hatred toward the attacker among the Germans and Japanese, or caused them to rally to the support of their respective governments.
3. The Soviet population, while well aware of the atomic bomb, probably has a confused idea of its destructiveness. There is little evidence of special civil defense preparations against atomic attack and the Soviet public may have accepted official propaganda minimizing the importance of the atom bomb as a military weapon. Some Soviet citizens possibly feel that the atom bomb may become a prohibited weapon like poison gas. It would thus appear that though the Kremlin suggests the US would use the atom bomb, the Soviet public is little prepared psychologically for atomic attack.
4. It is unlikely that atomic attacks would in themselves evoke increased support for the Kremlin. The Soviet population would probably react no more strongly to American atomic attack than to other military operations.
5. Moscow would undoubtedly attempt to capitalize on the Soviet population's deep-seated dread of war by labeling the US as the aggressor at the outbreak of hostilities. The people, however, would react to this charge with skepticism and await further developments for confirmation or

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refutation. Only if the population eventually concluded that the Kremlin was right would there possibly be any appreciable increase in support for the regime. US military operations, including atomic attacks, that came only after an overt Soviet military action would probably not serve as confirmation of Moscow's position.

6. The public would initially be skeptical of all official accounts of military operations. The Kremlin, as during the last war, would probably fail to stem the flow of rumors, and unfavorable military information, including reports of destruction wrought by atomic attacks, would spread rapidly.

7. American warnings of forthcoming atomic attacks would probably be heeded and would tend to lessen unfavorable reaction to the bombings. On the basis of World War II experience, disruptive effects in consequence of warnings would depend upon the actions predicted in the warnings being carried out as closely as possible.

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I. PSYCHOLOGICAL WARFARE PRINCIPLES RELATIVE TO ATOMIC ATTACK ON USSR  
TO BE DERIVED FROM STRATEGIC BOMBING DURING WORLD WAR II

Although strategic bombing was second to military defeats at the fighting fronts in depressing civilian morale and inducing defeatism in Germany during World War II, it was the principal means of affecting directly the entire non-military population. The same was true in Japan except that there civilian morale was already low before systematic attacks on the home islands were begun in June 1944. It was, however, depressed even further as the bombing raids increased. In both areas air attacks demonstrated impressively to the civilians the superior strength of the Allies and the corresponding weakness of their own military forces. Furthermore, they provided civilians with concrete evidence effectively refuting official propaganda which promised successes or eventual victory and thereby served to discredit the ruling circles in the eyes of the masses.

1. Effect of Allied Bombing on German and Japanese Civilian Morale.

Air raids were especially effective in bringing the war within the personal experience of the German and Japanese civilian. While only the inhabitants of 66 Japanese cities and about one-third of the Germans were subjected to direct bombing, virtually every German and Japanese civilian suffered the indirect effects of food and supply shortages and disruption of transportation and communication or witnessed Allied airplanes flying overhead unchallenged and threatening individual safety.

The importance of air bombing in depressing German civilian morale was indicated by the fact that one of every three Germans questioned by the United States Strategic Bombing Survey indicated his morale was more affected

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by bombing than by any other single factor. The principal psychological effects were defeatism, hopelessness, fatalism, apathy, and fear. These expressed themselves in a loss of hope for victory, distrust of leadership, decreased work efficiency, and willingness to surrender.

Morale of German civilians did not deteriorate in direct ratio to the mounting severity of air attacks. Its fall was most precipitous under light and medium bombing but tended to level off thereafter. Anxiety, loss of confidence in leadership, war weariness, and willingness to surrender were evidently as great among those enduring medium attacks as among the heavily bombed, although absenteeism from work was, by force of circumstances, greater in heavily attacked areas. While it was impossible to develop a correlation between the severity of air attacks and subversive activities, it was nevertheless noted in Germany that willingness to listen to Allied radio propaganda was as great under light as under medium and heavy attacks. It is likely that heavy attacks hindered the activities of dissidents and subversives as well as those of the regime's repressive agencies. The German experience thus tended to indicate that maximum damaging effect on civilian morale would have been obtained by lighter raids over a wider area than by concentrated bombing of limited targets.

In Japan the continual defeats on the military fronts after the initial flurry of victories had depressed morale, even before systematic bombing of the metropolitan areas began in June 1944. Therefore air attacks did not result in a sharp decline of civilian morale, but rather aggravated an already difficult situation. Nevertheless, differences, though often small, were evident in the reactions and feelings between bombed and unbombed

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people. The bombed tended to feel their sacrifice for the war was disproportionate and were more critical of the leadership. They were usually more certain of eventual defeat and more likely to be unwilling to continue fighting. War weariness was greater among the bombed who tended to absent themselves from their jobs more often and work less efficiently. The depressing influence of bombing on civilian morale in Japan tended to be greater in the more heavily bombed than unbombed or lightly bombed areas, but to what extent this could be ascribed to air attacks rather than to other factors is unknown. Thus it would probably be inaccurate to claim that the Japanese experience contradicted that of Germany where it is believed that widespread bombing would have had more adverse effect on civilian morale than concentrated bombing of limited areas.

2. Propaganda Measures Unsuccessful in Counteracting Psychological Impact of Bombings. Propaganda efforts of the German and Japanese governments to counteract the effect of Allied bombings were largely ineffective. At first the German propaganda ministry limited news reports, withheld names of cities bombed, mentioned no destruction except of churches, hospitals, and cultural institutions, and listed only Allied losses. The Japanese tried the same technique, but both governments found that it only increased popular antagonism, and people in bombed cities felt that their leaders lacked regard for their plight. German policy was soon reversed and more attention devoted to the suffering and destruction caused by raids. The tendency, however, to embellish accounts, discount the damage done, play up heroic defensive acts, and exaggerate losses of the enemy eventually resulted in popular distrust of official reports and increased antagonism

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toward the home government. Evidently the effectiveness of German propaganda decreased in proportion to the increase in personal experiences which contradicted official claims.

For a time in 1944 German propaganda about the retaliatory effectiveness of the V-weapons evoked a favorable response from the people. However, as the weapons failed to reduce the scale of Allied attacks a new scepticism developed toward official reports on military and air operations.

The unchallenged flight of American airplanes over Japan appears to have been a crowning blow to civilian morale. Indoctrinated with the slogan that Japan had been victorious in every war for over two thousand years, the constant defeats in "decisive" battles prior to systematic air attacks on the home islands had resulted in low morale. Finally when over 8.5 million people left heavily bombed cities to live elsewhere and disseminated eye-witness accounts of the destruction, this led to almost nationwide circulation of rumors contradicting official claims.

3. Effect on Control and Nazi Party Groups. Air bombings evidently had no appreciable effect on the Nazi machinery of control which remained effective until the close of the war. While the efficiency of both the Gestapo and of the average German civilian was seriously affected by the pressure of air raids, this was also true about opposition workers. They, like everyone else, were hampered by the disruption of communications and transportation.

With the exception of instilling fear and terror, air raids had no appreciable effect on the morale of Nazi Party members or persons who

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identified their cause with that of the regime. Belief in Nazism evidently had more influence than anything else on the morale of these elements and ardent Nazis subjected to heavy bombing on the whole maintained better morale than non-Nazis who were unbombed. It is possible that one of the factors bolstering the morale of those identified with the regime was the fear of defeat with its attendant consequences.

4. Bombing Did Not Increase Hatred of Allies. Neither in Germany nor in Japan did bombing arouse any sustained hatred of the enemy and thereby stiffen morale. At times it did arouse some anger and hatred which resulted in a temporary increase in determination to wage war. These aggressive emotions, however, had no ready outlet against the enemy and were soon directed against the regime for beginning air warfare and being unable to provide adequate defense against it. Moreover, under continual bombing, hatred for the enemy was rapidly replaced by concern over personal safety or by defection and apathy.

In Japan nearly half of the people held the regime responsible for the bombings since it had started the war and was unable to provide sufficient protection. However, a large segment of the population regarded responsibility for the bombings with fatalism and said that neither side was at fault since air attacks were an inevitable consequence of modern warfare.

5. Atomic Bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. The atomic bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki had a decided effect on the morale of the local residents, although the resultant decline of morale was not as great as in heavily bombed centers because both cities had been relatively untouched by

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air warfare previously. The atom bomb evidently had more effect on Japanese leaders than on rank and file civilians and spurred on peace efforts which had already been begun in May 1945.

The principal reaction to the bombing in the two cities was one of fear, second, admiration for the skill to produce the weapon, and third, anger against the bomb and the US for using it. These emotional reactions, however, must be differentiated from the morale effects which evidently were like those produced by heavy concentrations of conventional bombs. Morale of civilians in the two cities did not drop below that of the population elsewhere. The general air attack and military losses had more effect on the rest of the Japanese people in inducing loss of hope for victory and an unwillingness to continue the war, but in Hiroshima and Nagasaki the atomic bomb was the principal depressant.

Quite naturally, the effect of atomic bombs was greatest in the localities where used. While fear and terror were the principal reactions induced in the rest of the population too, they were half as intense as among those exposed to the bombs. Moreover, the feelings of hatred and anger were also less intense in the rest of the population. The power of the bombs to induce defeatism and unwillingness to continue the war was greatest within a radius of 60 miles of either city, it grew less intense at greater distances from the target cities.

In assessing the depressing effects of the atomic bomb on Japanese morale, it must be borne in mind that previous demoralizing experiences, absence of publicity, and resultant lack of knowledge of atomic energy as a military weapon tended to minimize the results of the bombings. Furthermore, the rapidity with which the war ended after the atomic attacks prevented

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the extension of its effects on the morale of the entire Japanese population. It is also likely that the sudden end of hostilities terminated the depressing effects of the bombings on the morale of residents of Hiroshima and Nagasaki themselves.

6. Soviet Reaction to German Bombing. Little information is available on the reaction of the Soviet population to German air raids, but there is evidence that the Kremlin was extremely sensitive about the possible effect on morale, especially in Moscow. Measures were taken immediately to clean up damaged areas. Partially damaged buildings were reported to have been repaired promptly and in one case a shell was built over a well-known building masking the fact that it had been made unusable by air attack.

The German practice of giving advanced warnings of air attacks apparently had some success in disrupting activities in target cities and in causing disillusionment over the ability of the Soviet air force to resist. A similar reaction was reported to have been brought about in Moscow by the regularity with which the Germans attacked the city every evening at the same hour. Warnings were most effective when previous ones had been made and were followed by bombing attacks.

Reaction of the Soviet population to Luftwaffe attacks reportedly varied according to the intensity and duration of the bombings and the targets involved. As a rule when military objectives were bombed, people accepted the air attacks as an integral part of war. When, however, the Kremlin counterbombed German-occupied Soviet territory the people evidently reacted with more hostility.

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II. PUBLIC KNOWLEDGE OF AND ATTITUDE TOWARD CONVENTIONAL AND ATOMIC  
BOMBING IN THE SOVIET UNION

While the Kremlin has repeatedly drawn attention to the existence of the atomic bomb it has released little information to the Soviet public on the effects of atomic attacks and has consistently played down the military importance of the bomb even since the announcement of its possession by the USSR. Soviet propaganda has implied that the US would use the atomic bomb against the USSR if war broke out, but few special civil defense measures against possible atomic attacks have been undertaken. While the average citizen's knowledge of atomic bombing is probably not extensive, his acquaintance with conventional strategic bombing is greater and is based on first-hand experience with German bombing, accounts of Soviet bombing of Germany, and current Soviet propaganda regarding US air attacks in North Korea.

1. Little Notion of Effect of Atomic Bombings: The Soviet citizen can readily obtain information on the principles of atomic theory and probably understands the importance of uranium in the manufacture of atomic bombs, but he probably has little notion of the actual effect of atomic explosions. He has no access to comprehensive reports on the results of the Hiroshima and Nagasaki bombings and subsequent experimental explosions of atomic bombs. He can only surmise the effectiveness of the bomb from general rumors about its potentialities, virulent Soviet demands at the UN and elsewhere for prohibiting atomic warfare, and Soviet propaganda regarding the "viciousness" of the capitalists for concentrating on the destructive

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rather than constructive uses of atomic energy.

The Soviet press and radio devoted little attention to the bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki and the subsequent tests of the bomb. No lengthy discussion on the use and effects of the atomic bomb ever appeared in leading Soviet newspapers. Only a few statements about the power of an atomic bomb were released to the public. The brief TASS release on August 7, 1945 on the bombing of Hiroshima quoted the official US communique that the explosion exceeded the "destructive force of 20,000 tons of dynamite." Later that year, at the anniversary of the November Revolution Molotov referred to the "enormous destructive power" of the bomb, but subsequent discussions of the bomb minimized its effectiveness both as a tactical weapon and as a factor in ending the war with Japan. TASS comment on the Bikini atomic tests in July 1946 deprecated the importance of the bomb. A feature article in Pravda charged that the tests were non-scientific and criticized the results as well as the expenditures made on the tests. Stalin himself gave his stamp of approval to the tendency to minimize the importance of the bomb when he said in September 1946 that "atomic bombs are intended for intimidating weak nerves, but they cannot decide the outcome of war, since atomic bombs are by no means sufficient for this purpose."

Moscow continued to underplay the significance of the bomb both immediately before and after President Truman's 1949 announcement that the USSR had successfully produced an atomic explosion. Soviet encyclopedias published in 1948 and 1950 stated that the bombs dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki did not affect the course of military operations. They claimed that most of the damage in the bombed cities was due to uncontrolled fires started by the bomb. Other Soviet sources asserted that the American atomic

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bomb was to be feared no more than other types of highly destructive bombs and that the "Anglo-American theory of atomic warfare" was as useless as the Nazi Blitzkrieg theory. In a number of instances there has even been an effort to ridicule the effectiveness of the bomb and of Western reliance on it.

The Kremlin has released little information to the Soviet public on the effect of radioactivity and it is likely, therefore, that the people would remain calmer than most Americans under initial bomb attacks. Soviet scientists, however, apparently have some understanding of the effects of atomic explosions. [REDACTED]

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[REDACTED] one of the most popular and widely circulated books among scientists in the USSR is the Russian translation of the Smythe report. Many of them, consequently, are well informed on the potentialities of the first bombs. Subsequent tests of atomic bombs, however, were not given much publicity even among scientists, and the consensus among them as well as the general public seems to be that the Bikini tests were a failure. Recently observed atomic exhibits for young school children in Moscow minimized the importance of the bombs.

In addition to minimizing the effectiveness of the atomic bomb, Soviet leaders have also encouraged the feeling that the USSR has adequate counter-weapons. Lieutenant General Blagonravov, head of the USSR Artillery Academy, said in a radio broadcast that Russian artillery would be a major factor in an atomic war and that "artillery has always found a means of countering enemy inventions." A prominent Soviet physicist in 1950 indicated that new Soviet technical achievements, presumably in physics, would "again surprise the world."

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The few concrete facts on an atomic explosion which<sup>were</sup> released in the USSR appeared soon after the termination of World War II in publications of limited circulation. The Soviet periodical Science and Life, referring to the Hiroshima and Nagasaki bombings stated in October 1945, "The havoc wrought by this bomb was colossal. The explosion of uranium is 20 million times more violent than the explosion of a similar amount of the most powerful explosive known heretofore. The pillar of smoke and dust over the target areas rose to an altitude of 12 kilometers." However, subsequent statements were studiously casual. One Soviet source alleged that "it would be completely incorrect to reckon that the destructive force of an atom bomb weighing one kilogram is the equivalent of 15,000 tons of TNT." Another source in 1947 acknowledged that over 25,000 lives were lost at Nagasaki but asserted that the loss was mainly due to fire and the flimsy paper and bamboo houses in the city. TASS in 1950 published figures, allegedly released by a Japanese research institute, inferring that the only casualties resulting from the atomic bombings were 8,481 injured at Hiroshima and 7,967 at Nagasaki.

2. Soviet Propaganda on US Intentions to Use Atom Bombs. Soviet propaganda on alleged US preparations for an attack on the USSR suggests that strategic air attacks with the atom bomb would be made on Soviet territory. The US has been charged with carrying on "atomic diplomacy" to achieve world hegemony. Soviet literary works such as the spy story of US attempts to obtain Soviet military secrets which was serialized in the pictorial magazine Ogonek in late 1950 have obviously attempted to create a

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high degree of awareness of the possibility of atomic, chemical, or other type of attack by the US.

The reaction of many Soviet citizens to propaganda suggesting air attacks of any sort is probably more a reflection of their fear of war in general than fear of any particular weapon.

3. Few Indications of Civil Defense Preparations for Atomic Attack.

Information on civil defense preparations against atomic air raids is very limited, but Osoaviakhim, the old paramilitary society, apparently was conducting some such training prior to its reorganization in May 1948. Instruction in the detection of radioactivity was reportedly offered and atomic air raids were simulated to drill the population in strategic areas for rapid mass movement to shelters or out of the affected areas. Dosarm (Voluntary Society for Assisting the Army) may be continuing this training since it took over anti-aircraft and civil defense training from Osoaviakhim.

Soviet city planners evidently have made some provision for atomic attacks in the planning and reconstruction of cities. Za Oboronu (Osoaviakhim's publication) in February 1948 stated that "the appearance of the atomic weapon" and other new weapons placed additional responsibilities on local anti-aircraft defense (MPVO) and these would have to be taken into account in planning and building cities.

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### III. PROBABLE IMPACT OF STRATEGIC AIR ATTACKS ON SOVIET MORALE

While Soviet defectors are not uniform in their opinions on the effect atomic bombing would have on the attitude of their countrymen toward the Kremlin and the attacker, the majority seem to feel that if military targets were selected the reaction of the masses to the attacker would not be hostile. Many of the defectors who do not oppose use of the bomb note that it would be desirable to issue warnings before the attacks and to stress that the regime is the enemy rather than the people.

While morale can be expected to stand up against the threat of atomic warfare or even isolated instances of actual bombing, the psychological preparation of the people is probably insufficient to withstand widespread atomic bombing of Soviet industrial centers. The actual experience of heavy bombing is likely to result in shock, fear, and possibly panic in the target areas. Under repeated heavy bombing, judging from the experience of World War II, civilian morale would deteriorate, especially if civil defense measures and the Soviet air force were unable to cope with or limit the effectiveness of air attacks. The reaction in the long run under these conditions would probably be one of apathy and concern only with personal survival. Reactions may vary to some extent between the bombed and unbombed, the Great Russians and the national minorities, and the various social strata of the population.

1. Hate Not Likely to be Aroused. It is unlikely that in the long run air attacks would unite the Soviet people around their regime and create hatred of and determination to resist the US. Although there may be an

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initial flare-up of anger toward the enemy and a temporary stiffening of the will to resist, as evidenced among bombed populations in the last war, these manifestations probably would be shortlived and finally would be expended on domestic leaders and fellow citizens, especially if counter-measures to air attacks were not successful. The likelihood of such a development is further strengthened by the fact that considerable apathy already exists among the population, and a wide gap separates the people from their leaders. Moreover, it is unlikely that Soviet citizens would sustain hatred toward the US for a prolonged period. The difficulty of building up hatred for the US is recognized by the Soviet leaders and is indicated by the amount of postwar propaganda the Kremlin has disseminated at home to defile the US despite the virtual impossibility for Americans to make any rebuttal.

2. Reactions According to Groups. The initial reaction to strategic bombing in areas not actually bombed probably would be milder than in bombed ones and in case of atom bomb attacks would possibly be tinged with disbelief. Stronger fear reaction would probably appear only when the unbombed saw or heard evidence of the effect of atomic bombings. A part of the Soviet population would undoubtedly accept strategic bombing as an inevitable consequence of war and its reaction would reflect a general dread of war rather than of strategic bombing.

It is possible that some national minorities not personally experiencing bombing attacks would actually welcome them as a prelude to liberation. Minorities, particularly the Baltic people and Western Ukrainians,

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who formed resistance groups during and after World War II, may be inspired, even though personally involved in air attacks, to try to sabotage the Soviet war effort. It is not likely, however, that strategic bombing alone would incite minorities to rebel against the Soviet regime, and probably only after enemy ground forces approached or entered the USSR would national resistance groups of significant strength be organized. In the last war the repressive agencies of Germany and Japan prevented subversive action and similar Soviet organs may be equally effective.

The reaction of various social groups would probably correspond fairly closely with the variations in peacetime morale of such groups. Many Party members and groups whose interests are identified with the regime, such as "non-Party Bolsheviks," high government officials, better-paid intellectuals, and the elite among workers and peasants, would probably show considerable determination to resist the enemy initially and may maintain their morale under continued bombing. On the other hand the apathy of the unskilled worker and peasant and some members of the intelligentsia would probably grow more acute under continued bombing. The reaction of military officers in the USSR would probably be similar to that of other privileged groups, but most enlisted men would be subject to the fears, deterioration of morale, and eventual apathy of the average citizen.

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IV. NATURE AND EFFECTIVENESS OF POSSIBLE SOVIET PROPAGANDA MEASURES TO  
COUNTER EFFECTS OF THE ATTACKS

Soviet propaganda would undoubtedly react to atomic bombings by alleging that they were inhuman and indiscriminate. In World War II Moscow's propaganda machine devoted much attention to alleged atrocities committed by the enemy. This approach is being repeated in the propaganda treatment of the Korean war. At the same time, as during the German advance on Moscow in 1941, there may also be considerable silence on the effects of enemy bombing raids. However, retaliatory raids by the Soviet air force, either real or fictional, would undoubtedly be cited to boost morale.

This technique may be successful for a time. However, if adequate countermeasures to actual bombing are not taken its effectiveness would probably decline rapidly. German attempts to hide the effects of bombing raids from the people caused considerable dissatisfaction. Moreover, the Soviet news blackout on the German advance into the USSR was apparently unsuccessful and accurate war information spread rapidly via the grapevine through Moscow and the countryside. This led to a Stalin order early in the war to deal summarily with "rumor-mongers." Such a phenomenon would be likely to occur again if Soviet leaders tried either to blackout or distort news reports. Evidence that rumor continues to operate effectively in the USSR was provided in 1947 when many Soviet citizens became aware of plans to devalue the ruble and attempted to translate their savings into goods.

Soviet propaganda may also attempt to bolster the morale of the Great Russians under air attack by appealing to national persecution and

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cultural inferiority complexes which seem to exist among many of them. Since, however, many Soviet citizens are skeptical of official pronouncements, it is likely that the Kremlin's propaganda to counteract enemy air attacks would be limited in effect. This would be particularly so when, as was demonstrated in Germany and Japan, official reports were at variance with personal experience.

#### V. CHOICE OF TARGETS

Some Soviet defectors have indicated that atomic attack on military targets would probably have a minimal effect on popular feeling. Soviet propaganda would stress destruction of any non-military installations as was done in World War II and is being done in the Korean war. However, if it were clear that these were not the intended targets then it is likely that there would be no significant reaction. There are few industrial cities the destruction of which would greatly anger the average Russian. During the last war when the Dnepr Dam, one of the most prized Soviet developments, was damaged no noticeable increase of hatred for the Germans ensued. There might well be somewhat greater resentment over bombing of non-industrial and non-military targets if it occurred regularly, but there is no indication that reaction would be decisively any different from what it would be if only selected targets were attacked.

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VI. OTHER CIRCUMSTANCES POSSIBLY AFFECTING SOVIET REACTION

Soviet propaganda at the outbreak of war undoubtedly would stamp the US as the aggressor. Moscow has charged the US with hostile intentions and preparation for aggression virtually without interruption since 1947. The true story of the outbreak of hostilities probably would be withheld or distorted to depict the Soviet Union as the victim. It is unlikely that Soviet charges concerning the initiation of hostilities by the US would have any appreciable effect on the reaction of the people to bombings. The will to resist would possibly be strengthened temporarily in some cases but most of the population would not be likely to rise from its apathetic state. Realization that the USSR was the aggressor or launched the first air attack would probably evoke no significant reaction from the Soviet population. It would result mainly in further increasing popular skepticism toward official pronouncements. The Kremlin's repressive agencies could be expected to keep any hostile reaction of the population under control.

Soviet military successes on land or atomic bombing of the US would possibly lessen some of the fear and distress of the Soviet people, especially those not directly involved in air attacks. The effect, however, would probably be only temporary and, unless Soviet defenses against air attacks proved effective, would have little long term influence on Soviet morale. Official Soviet reports of military successes, even if true, would probably be accepted with some reservation by the public and would not greatly affect public reactions unless confirmed by rumors and information passed by word of mouth. Ambiguous reports from the Korean theater, which exaggerate

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Communist successes and minimize or even withhold news of defeats, have probably contributed to the skepticism of the Russian public toward their official news sources.

The effect of propaganda on the reactions of the Soviet people probably would depend largely on the personal experiences and desires of each citizen. American propaganda would probably be similarly tested by the Soviet public. Statements that the US objective was to eliminate the Communist regime and destroy Soviet war-making potential would be most effective if the results of air attacks and other actions appeared to confirm them. If, however, the people experienced excessive bombing of civilian and non-military targets, US propaganda efforts along this line might be somewhat discredited.

The widespread dissemination, preferably by leaflets, of warnings of forthcoming atomic attacks and advice on the precautions to be taken would probably prove effective in reducing unfavorable reactions of the Soviet public to US strategic bombing. From charges in the Soviet press that civil defense measures against atomic attacks are being used in the US to incite war hysteria, the Soviet public must be aware that Americans have determined what is the best means of limiting the effects of atomic explosions. Since the Soviet public has evidently received little training in meeting atomic air raids, after the first ones those personally involved would probably be especially receptive to advice on the precautions to be taken. The Soviet grapevine in all likelihood would make the population of unbombed areas also receptive to such advice. Warnings of forthcoming attacks would also probably destroy some of the notions of American brutality and

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inhumanity stimulated by Soviet propaganda. Moreover, propaganda of Soviet invincibility and superiority would probably be largely discredited both by the appearance of warning leaflets and subsequent execution of air raids or other operations on schedule.

In using warnings about forthcoming attacks against the USSR maximum effectiveness would probably depend on the precision with which predicted operations were carried out. Accuracy is evidently especially impressive to the Soviet population which has learned to question the truthfulness of official statements. German warnings to the Soviet population in World War II apparently were successful because of their timing and accuracy.

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